



California Whale Entanglement Discussion

Dungeness Crab Fishing Gear Working Group – Overview and Tasks

September—November 2015

Background

In April 2015, the California Dungeness Crab Task Force (DCTF) was informed of increasing trends in large whale entanglements, as reported by the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). On August 20, 2015 the Ocean Protection Council (OPC), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), and NMFS hosted a meeting focused on sharing information between agencies, fishermen, environmental organizations, and others. As a next step, a Working Group will be convened to further discuss and develop short-term strategies and begin exploring long-term options for reducing the risk of whale entanglements in California Dungeness crab fishing gear.

Working Group Composition

The Working Group will be composed of approximately 15-20 individuals representing a range of interest groups. The selection of the Working Group will be at the discretion of the CDFW Marine Region Manager. In comprising the Working Group, the Region Manager may consider professional expertise or experience, diversity of perspectives, geographic location, willingness to express fundamental interests as opposed to fixed positions, access to and effective use of a communication network, willingness to convey the interests of one or more interest groups and to integrate diverse interests, capacity to work with diverse viewpoints, and ability to work constructively and collaboratively.

Charge

The Working Group's charge is to provide assistance with the following key tasks; it is not to debate the virtues of whether efforts should be made by the Dungeness crab industry to reduce the potential for whale entanglements.

The goal of the Working Group is to develop short- and long-term ideas and options for reducing the risk of whale entanglements in Dungeness crab fishing gear. In cooperation with a facilitation team and staff from the CDFW, NMFS, and OPC, the Working Group will:

- Provide local and experiential knowledge related to whale entanglements and Dungeness crab fishing in California waters to inform idea development and work toward constructive outcomes;
- Review and consider readily available sources of information, such as whale entanglement and fishery data and ideas generated by various interest groups;
- Engage in an open dialogue with other Working Group participants to support cross-interest discussions;
- Identify data needs, including ways for the Working Group to be active in supporting new sources of information, to facilitate the understanding of the issue and inform options for moving forward;
- Develop short- and long-term strategies, including potential concepts for testing during the 2015-16 Dungeness crab fishing season, to reduce entanglement risk; and
- Conduct outreach to constituent groups for feedback and insights on option(s) development.

All recommendations of the Working Group will be finalized during scheduled meetings of the group. Public summaries of Working Group deliberations and outcomes will be made available on OPC and CDFW websites. All Working Group participants must have an active email address and phone number.

Duration and Attendance

Working Group participants will initially serve from September 21, 2015 through November 15, 2015. Participants are expected to attend all regular meetings of the group, including two (2) in-person meetings: Monday, September 21 and Thursday, October 8. Meetings will be held in Santa Rosa, CA. A discrete number of conference calls may also be required (TBD).

Alternates will not be permitted in the event that a Working Group participant is unable to be present at a meeting or during a conference call.

Working Group participants will be expected to contribute to a constructive dialogue at each meeting, which may involve additional work between meetings including reading materials, connecting with the facilitation team, and outreach to constituents between scheduled meetings.

Remuneration

Working Group participants will be expected to cover their own travel expenditures.

Contact

For those interested in participating in the Working Group, please contact info@strategicearth.com. Selection of Working Group participants will be made on or before the week of September 14, 2015.